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**REMARKS BY CONGRESSWOMAN DORIS O. MATSUI
ON THE IRAQ SUPPLEMENTAL**

"We have a moral obligation to support our troops and their families."

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, the U.S. House of Representatives passed emergency supplemental funding for military spending and reconstruction assistance to Iraq and Afghanistan by a vote of 388 to 43.

"I have been clear in my support of the troops serving in Iraq from the very beginning of my campaign. I have been just as clear in my opposition to the war itself, and to the Bush Administration's mishandling of the post-war reconstruction. Mr. Bush manipulated the reasons for going to war, showed blatant disregard for the diplomatic options available to the United States, and failed in his duty as Commander in Chief to plan for the peace.

"However, we cannot allow Mr. Bush's wrongheaded policies make us lose sight of the reality on the ground for our men and women in the military. Our troops continue to train Iraqi security forces and protect Iraq civilians against the insurgency, in the hope that with stability in Iraq, they may come home. Until that day, they desperately need the vehicle armor kits and radio jamming equipment to protect against roadside bombs and other deadly attacks, protection this legislation would provide. Furthermore, the significant increases in soldiers' death gratuity and subsidized life insurance benefits are critically important for the families of soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice. Nothing can compensate them for their loss, but as a nation we have a moral obligation to look after their families. In short, the brave young men and women who put their lives on the line every day, and their families here at home, deserve all of the support this country can provide. For these reasons, I voted to support the troops and support this emergency funding."

As passed by the House of Representatives, H.R. 1268 increases the military death gratuity from \$12,000 to \$100,000, and subsidized life insurance benefits from \$250,000 to \$400,000 for families of soldiers who died or were killed while on active duty beginning from Oct. 7, 2001. The bill also provides \$48 million above the President's request for vehicle armor kits, more than double the President's request for new trucks, and 50% more than the President requested for night-vision equipment. Finally, it included \$50 million that the President did not request for radio jamming equipment, which assists soldiers in disrupting the detonation of roadside bombs and mines.

"Finally, I maintain my strong opposition to the Real ID Act. I was disappointed that the Republican Leadership chose to attach this controversial and divisive bill to must-pass legislation to protect our troops. I joined the overwhelming majority of my Democratic colleagues yesterday in voting to block REAL ID from moving forward. Unfortunately, this vote failed. I will continue to oppose REAL ID legislation, and urge that this provision be removed during Senate consideration or in the final conference report."

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